

American Renaissance

There is not a truth existing which I fear, or would wish unknown to the whole world.

— Thomas Jefferson

Vol. 3, No. 1

January 1992

Why Is Africa Poor?

Just as American blacks blame whites for their failures, Africans deny responsibility for the misery they bring on themselves.

by William Robertson Boggs

Black Africa is the poorest part of the world by far. It is in Africa that we find countries like Zaire, Ethiopia, Chad, and the Sudan, where gross national product per person is less than \$200 a year. The 41 nations of sub-Saharan Africa produce no more wealth than the tiny country of Belgium, which has only one forty-fifth as many people. Of all of the region's economic production, white-run South Africa accounts for *three quarters*.

Numbers like these mean that Africans live in misery so desperate that Americans can scarcely imagine it. Every year, thousands of Africans die of starvation. In bad years, hundreds of thousands starve. Even in tropical parts of Africa untouched by famine, as many as one third of all children die before the age of five. One in a hundred births kills the mother. Malaria, sleeping sickness, hepatitis, leprosy, and AIDS are rampant.

Nevertheless, the population of Africa grows faster than that of any other region of the world. The total number of children, grand children, and great-grand children that the average American woman will have is 14. The equivalent figure for the average African woman is 258! Despite the ravages of disease, starvation, and inter-tribal warfare, Africa's population increases by more than three percent a year. At that rate, populations can double in 20 years.

Standard Explanations

Why is Africa poor? The standard explanations blame anyone but the Africans. Colonization by whites, it is



said, kept Africa poor. The slave trade depleted the continent and impoverished it. Multinational corporations plundered it.

Just as blacks in America seek to explain their own failings by blaming them on whites, Africans explain their own poverty by blaming Europe. Recently, this is how a broadcast on Somalia's state-owned radio attacked the BBC for reporting uncomplimen-

No pre-contact African society had devised a written language or had discovered the wheel.

tary facts: "The BBC's day dream . . . was to succeed once again in looting at will the abundant natural resources both on land and at sea in the third world, particularly in Africa." The colonial bogeyman still lives.

The argument that colonization accounts for Africa's poverty is so easily refuted that it should have gone out of currency long ago. That it has not can be attributed only to the apparently endless capacity of whites to accept arguments that paint them as villain.

To believe that colonization thwarted the economic development of Africa is to believe that indigenous societies were on their way towards prosperity but were brutally shoved off course by Europeans. In fact, African societies south of the Sahara that had not had contact either with Europeans or with Middle Eastern traders showed no signs of modern development. No pre-contact African society had devised a written language or had discovered the wheel. None had a calendar, or built multi-story buildings. No African had learned how to domesticate animals. The smelting of iron was widespread, as was fire-hardened pottery, but the continent did not produce anything that could be called a mechanical device.

Africans had no concept of the biological origins of disease, and attributed personal misfortunes to the work of evil spirits. Slavery was widely practiced, and deeply rooted in Africa long before the arrival of Europeans. There is no reason to think that, left to themselves, Africans would have risen from the primitive conditions in which Europeans found them.

The European slave trade, though unquestionably harmful to Africa, was hardly the depopulating scourge it is often made out to be. When the 15th century Portuguese began sailing down the coast, they met long-established slave traders keen to sell off surpluses. Europeans almost never

Continued on page 3



Letters from Readers

Sir — Steven Howell's piece on Japan (Sept. and Oct., 1991) made for interesting reading. From my own limited experience, I would go along with what he says about the "brave dwarves," excepting one thing. "The Japanese," he writes, "take a traditional view of homosexuality: they don't like it. There is no trace of a 'gay rights' movement . . ."

Well, there is a magazine called *June*, not sold under the counter but quite openly, and with a claimed circulation of 50,000, which deals with homosexuality from a "traditional Japanese" view that would cause outrage in much of the US. The magazine is produced by young women and school girls! It discusses coy and invariably unconsummated erotic and passionate relationships between people of the same sex, in school and in the academy, and includes a letters page with discussions by readers (mostly female) of the significance of such things as pederasty. The attitude is anything but hostile. (Incidentally, the age of consent for both sexes in Japan is 13.)

Moreover, Yukio Mishima, the most famous of Japan's post-war writers and an ardent traditionalist and patriot, was never taken to task by the "right" or the "left" for his veritable cult of homosexuality.

Michael Walker, Editor
The Scorpion
Schnellweider Straße 50
5000-Köln-80, Germany

The Scorpion is a thoughtful magazine with an editorial stance that most readers of AR would find congenial. — Ed.

Sir — In your December issue you mention the chairman of the New York University student senate, a black man named Jean LaMarre. Indeed, he did attract a great deal of attention because of the way he splashed out school funds on extravagant living, at a time when students were claiming that they could not possibly afford a tuition increase. Your readers may be interested to know that in October, Mr. LaMarre was reelected to his position.

Paul Strom, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Sir — Marian Evans did a generally good job of describing the black riots that erupted in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, after the accidental death of a black child in a traffic accident. However, she might have pointed out that in the month following the accident, there were dozens of anti-white and anti-Jewish incidents all over the city, not just in Crown Heights.

Whites and Jews were punched or slapped by blacks who "explained" that this was punishment for "Crown Heights," or for "killing babies." In one incident, five white teenagers were surrounded by blacks, who punched them, saying, "This is for Crown Heights. Hitler should have gotten you all." None of the whites was Jewish.

Susan Mikulski, Queens, N.Y.

Sir — Lawrence Auster argues (AR, Nov. 1991) that it would be neither moral nor practical to institute a race-based immigration policy. His view clashes with well-established principles of international law.

The concept of national self-determination includes the right of a people to preserve its ethnic/racial identity. This right is guaranteed to all nations by the United Nations Charter (1945), the U.N. Declaration on Independence to Colonial Countries (1960), the U.N. Declaration on Principles of International Law (1970), A Declaration on the Principles Governing Relations among American States (1973), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1974), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1974), and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (1974).

By the logic of Mr. Auster's thinking, the framers of international law, the populations of independent nations, and those peoples struggling for independence—Croatians, Slovenes, Ukrainians, Tibetans, etc.—are all racist and are seeking something both impractical and immoral. If Mr. Auster means for his rules to apply only to the United States, then he must explain why.

The immigration policy implemented by the U.S. government since 1965 is clearly illegal. As Mr. Auster points out, it violates the clear intent of the 1965 Congress, which repeatedly declared that the law would not reduce the European-American proportion of the American population. That proportion has already dropped 14 percent since 1965.

It also violates international customary law against genocide, which is based on the 1948 Genocide Convention—"inflicting upon a group (national, ethnic, racial, or religious) conditions of life calculated to bring about its destruction, in whole or in part."

For the past 25 years, both the Congress and the Presidents have failed either to honor their promises or to respect the wishes of the European-American majority. If the "national suicide" that Mr. Auster fears is to be avoided, it will only be through the exercise, by European-Americans, of their legal right to national self-determination.

Joseph E. Fallon, Rye, N.Y. •



American Renaissance

Samuel Taylor, Editor
Thomas Jackson, Assistant Editor
Carol Fusco, Business Manager
William Robertson Boggs, Contributing Editor
Marian Evans, Contributing Editor

American Renaissance is published monthly by the Jefferson Institute. Subscriptions are \$20.00 per year. For first class postage, add \$8.00. Subscriptions to Canada (first class) and overseas (surface mail) are \$30.00. Overseas airmail subscriptions are \$40.00. Foreign subscribers should send U.S. dollars or equivalent in convertible bank notes.

Please make checks payable to: American Renaissance, P. O. Box 2504 Menlo Park, CA 94026. Facsimile: (415) 321-1483.

Continued from page 1

went on slaving expeditions into the interior. They bought slaves from dealers, which means that slaves taken from Africa were first enslaved by other Africans.

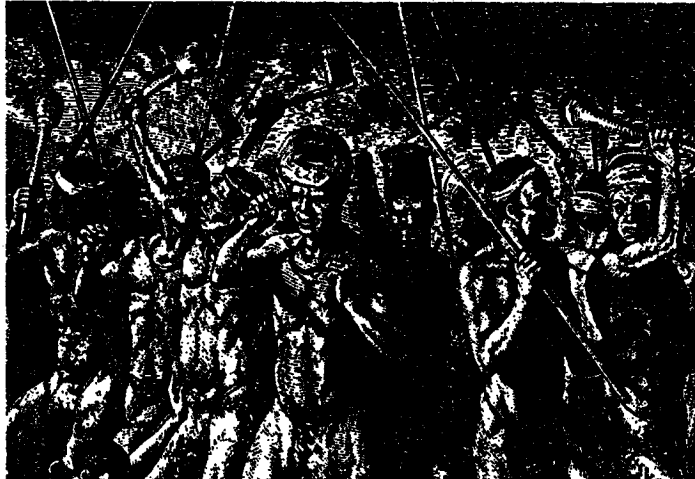
At the same time, Europeans introduced two New World staples that could be stored—cassava and corn—revolutionizing the African food supply. The sudden increase in population more than made up for losses to the European slave trade which, in any case, ended by the middle of the 19th century.

It was trade with Europeans that introduced modernity to iron-age Africa. Far from hobbling and holding the continent back, colonization laid the foundations for whatever evidence of economic progress can now be found in Africa. It was Europeans who built roads and rail lines, introduced piped water, schools and telecommunications, and built national administrations. Nothing suggests that Africans would have achieved any of this on their own.

There is no question but that life for Africans improved steadily under colonization. By the 1960s, when most of Africa became independent, the region exported food. Now, it devours more than \$1 billion a year in Western food aid, and thousands still starve.

It is possible to argue that Africans might have been better off if they had been left entirely alone. This is to take a romantic view of the disease, tribal

warfare, slavery, and ignorance that were widespread on the continent. Moreover, no African group that has glimpsed the possibilities of Western progress has opted to return to purely African primitivism. This suggests that Africans themselves would rather have the benefits of Western technology than do without them. Given that people naturally yearn for medical advance and material progress, colonization was an obvious and striking



Pre-colonial Africans.

benefit to Africa.

The benefits are particularly clear in any comparison of those parts of Africa that were colonized with those that were not. Ethiopia remained independent except for a brief occupation by Italy during the 1930s. It is the poorest country on the continent, with an annual per capita gross national product (GNP) of \$130. Eritrea, which was absorbed by Ethiopia after the Second World War, had been an Italian colony for 50 years. It is more advanced in every way. Though it has

only three percent of Ethiopia's population, it has 30 percent of its industry. It recently won a decades-old war of independence against Ethiopia.

An equally stark contrast can be found in West Africa. Ivory Coast, heavily colonized by the French, is much better developed than neighboring Liberia, which was founded by freed American slaves in 1822. Liberians, apparently unaware of the political heresy they are uttering, freely attribute the miserable state of their country to its having gone without "the benefits of colonization."

The Decline Since Independence

What about Africa since independence? During the first few years, while some European procedures were still being followed, the standard of living in Africa continued to improve. It is in the last 20 years, during which Africans themselves have shaped their own nations, that conditions have deteriorated spectacularly. Virtually without exception, Africans have failed to build modern economies.

In the last dozen years, per capita GNP has fallen every year in Africa. By 1989, per capita food production in Africa was only three quarters what it had been in 1970. In 1985, an estimated 25 percent of African preschool children suffered from acute protein deficiency. Only five years later, an estimated 40 percent did.

It is not as though Africa has been neglected by white countries. Since the 1960s, they have poured more than \$300 billion in aid into the

continent. Tanzania, a favorite target for Scandinavian largess, received \$8.6 billion between 1970 and 1988—more than four times its 1988 GNP. By that year, Tanzania's annual per capita GNP was a pitiful \$160, lower than at independence in 1961.

Obviously, it is much easier for undeveloped nations to copy the tried and tested technology of nations that have gone before. They need not invent telephones or electric power generators. They need only install and

maintain what Europeans have invented. Africans cannot or will not.

Mobutu the Messiah

Often African "leaders" are outright pirates whose only interest is in enriching themselves and their cronies. Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seku is perhaps the worst. He has been in power since 1965, and has looted the country of an amount estimated to be between two and ten billion dollars. Either figure would make him one of the richest men in the world. He owns chateaus or estates in France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Ivory Coast. He has 11 palaces in Zaire itself, including one in his home village of Gbadolite that is so lavish it is known as the Versailles of the Jungle. Mr. Mobutu likes to be called "Messiah," and has worked up a personality cult for his hotel-maid mother that rivals that of the Virgin Mary.

President Mobutu has looted his country of an amount estimated to be between two and ten billion dollars.

Zaire, which is blessed with diamonds, gold, silver, copper, and uranium, should be one of the richest countries in the world. Today it has a per capita annual GNP of \$180. The World Bank has calculated that from 1973 to 1985, per capita income fell by 3.9 percent every year, and is now *one tenth* what it was in 1960 when the country became independent of Belgium.

Zaire has not built a hospital in 20 years. In the ones that still remain, nurses and doctors must be bribed to do their work. Road maintenance is so primitive that the 1,100-mile drive from the Atlantic to Zaire's eastern border that used to take two days now takes three weeks. In the rainy season, the trip may be impossible. Reliable electricity and plumbing are hazy memories from the colonial past.

Rarely do African leaders show the slightest evidence that they have any concern for their people. Consider Madagascar. When the French controlled the island, they nearly succeeded in wiping out the malaria mosquito. When the Malagasies were

given independence, they let public health programs fall into decay. By 1988, when 100,000 people had died of the disease in just six months, the na-

tional malaria-control laboratory owned one Bunsen burner and two old microscopes. The Swiss government, under World Bank auspices, has of-

Colonizing the White Man

Anti-white propaganda has so distorted the history of colonization that it can now be used by former colonials to turn the tables on their one-time masters. Europe and America are now open to colonization.

The obligatory view is that European nations waxed fat as they raped and plundered their colonies. In fact, Europe's wealthiest countries—Switzerland, Germany, the Scandinavian countries—never had colonies or only held them briefly. Some of the nations with the largest empires—Spain and Portugal—are, today, among the poorest. Even France and Britain were as much exhausted as enriched by empire.

Nor does the fact of having been a colony consign a nation to poverty and squalor. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States are successful nations that were once colonies. The most relevant African example is South Africa. It was likewise a colony, and *lost* its war of independence (the Boer War). Yet, it is today the only nation on the continent with a modern economy.

South Africa's detractors inevitably explain its success as a consequence of minority-white exploitation of blacks. Yet the standard of living for South Africa's blacks is higher than that of any nation south of the Sahara. In South Africa, there are more women with professional qualifications than in all the other black African nations combined. Immigrants from the surrounding black-run nations pour into South Africa, grateful for jobs that their own nations cannot provide.

Whether a nation was colonized or not is essentially irrelevant to whether it ultimately went on to success. Black nations, whether or not they were ever colonies, have been failures. White nations, whether or not they were ever colonies, have been successes. It is the people of a nation that forge its destiny.

But just as the welfare state is based on the assumption that no one, no matter how stupid or lazy, is responsible for his own poverty, current political orthodoxy assumes that no nation is responsible for its own poverty. Just as African poverty

is speciously attributed to European colonialism, so is Latin American poverty blamed on "exploitation" by the United States. The white man "owes" the third world billions of dollars as penance for his past crimes.

Foreign aid is welfare on an international scale. If rich countries can be convinced

that their wealth is founded on the poverty of others, they can more easily be persuaded to give money to failed nations. Similar thinking also underlies lax attitudes towards third-world immigration to Europe or the United States. If foreigners are fleeing misery for which we are somehow responsible, how can we turn them away?

The colonial powers are said to have sinned by taking wealth from the colonies and by sending settlers who weakened indigenous cultures and ways of life. Today, what does the third world do but take aid from the white nations and send settlers that weaken their cultures and ways of life? ●



ferred to donate 300 million tablets of anti-malarial drugs—enough to treat the entire population for two years—but the Madagascar government insists on selling them rather than handing them out free. This ensures that most people won't get them and that a few government officials will get even richer than they already are.

In the Sudan, where starving people are so desperate that they sell their children into slavery, government authorities refuse to let western relief

agencies operate unless they pay fat bribes. Even then, aid convoys are often attacked and pillaged by government soldiers who then sell relief supplies for their own profit.

In Zambia, the percentage of government spending that goes to education dropped from 19 percent in 1972 to 8 percent in 1987, even though the number of students doubled. Zambia's president, Kenneth Kaunda, has stolen so much of the state budget that he is estimated to be worth as

much as \$6 billion. In the capital, Lusaka, only an estimated one half of city employees actually work.

Ivory Coast is putting the finishing touches on a \$280 million Catholic cathedral made of marble, ivory, and gold. By papal request, the cupola will stand a few feet lower than that of St. Peter's in Rome, but Our Lady of Peace will still be able to accommodate 300,000 worshipers at a time. The cathedral is located, not in the capital, but 130 miles inland in the

That Old Time Religion

In theory, Africa is a highly Christian continent. Over 50 percent of the people of Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Cameroon, Madagascar, Ghana, Botswana, and Uganda are said to be Christian, as are more than 90 percent of the people of Zaire, Angola, Namibia, Congo-Brazzaville, and Gabon.

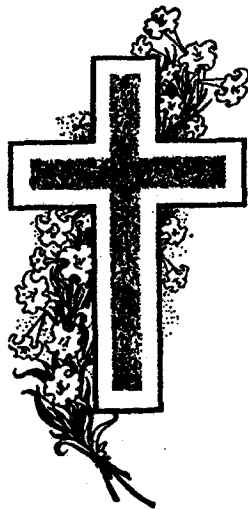
Just as it has among American blacks, Christianity among Africans has taken on a distinctive flavor. At the jam-packed masses in the Catholic cathedral in Nairobi, women ululate while men beat drums. In the Zairian rite, Christ is referred to as the Supreme Ancestor, sermons are interrupted with shouts of joy, and the bread and wine are danced up to the altar. The priest wears the robes of a tribal headman and is called the chief of God's people.

Some European churches are too stuffy for African tastes. For years, Anglicanism went nowhere, since it required that polygamists, upon baptism, divorce all but one of their wives. It 1988 it relaxed the rules, and now permits polygamists to join the church, so long as they promise not to acquire any more wives. This practice of bending the rules of Christianity to fit local tastes is known as inculturation.

For many Africans, inculturation doesn't go far enough. The most rapidly-growing African churches are entirely independent of mainstream denominations. They pick the bits of Christianity that go down well with Africans, ignore the rest, and mix in popular tribal superstitions. Of all the parts of Chris-

tianity, the Holy Spirit does best on a continent that takes spirits seriously.

A certain amount of cross-over is viewed as inevitable in the regular denominations as well, but lines must occasionally be drawn. When Zambia's faith-healing Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo started saying, "I have talked with the witches, I have dealt with the dead," he was called back to the Vatican for a talking to.



Missionaries report that many "Christians" revert to charms and voodoo in a crisis.

In Uganda, which is supposed to be 50 to 75 percent Christian, AIDS has been a big boost for witch doctors, since Europeans admit they can't cure it. One common treatment is to sacrifice a goat or sheep and, with the proper incantations, transfer the disease to the carcass. Then it is dragged out to a busy street corner, where a passerby will find it and get the disease in place of the patient. It is reportedly difficult to

get cleanup crews to take away the dead animals that frequently litter Ugandan street corners.

Perhaps because it has been reduced to a pre-colonial state of misery by misrule and civil war, Uganda seems to be particularly ripe for magic. In 1987, a rebel group went into battle against the government under the leadership of a warrior priestess named Alice Lackwena. Its members believed that if they smeared enough of Miss Lackwena's special ointment on their bodies they would be invulnerable to bullets. They were cut down like grass. In 1989, the Lackwena cult was revived under a new leader, whose members were known to charge into battle unarmed, shouting "James Bond," and throwing empty Coca-Cola bottles they believed would explode like hand grenades.

Magic has been put to high political purpose. In 1986, former president of Nigeria, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, suggested to an international group studying South Africa that it should use "juju," or black magic to bring an end to apartheid. It seems to have worked.

The trouble with juju is that you never know when it might be turned against you. In 1990, Nigerians got a big scare when it was reported that witch doctors had perfected a technique for stealing women's breasts and men's penises with a touch or a handshake. Several people were killed in riots that started when people began screaming that their genitals had been stolen. South Africa's revenge, perhaps. ●

home village of former president Houphouet-Boigny. By strange coincidence, the nation's only divided highway also runs to the same village, though it has little commerce with the capital. Upon his death, Mr. Houphouet-Boigny intends to be laid to rest, amid much pomp and official mourning, beneath Our Lady's dome.

Ivory Coast, on which France has lavished not only a great deal of aid but thousands of technical advisors, is, relatively speaking, an African success story. Nevertheless, its merchant class is almost exclusively Lebanese, and extravagances like the cathedral have forced the government to default on its international obligations.

National Incompetence

When African governments are not openly plundering their people, they are simply incompetent. Sierra Leone, which should be rich from its gold, diamonds, and fertile farm land, is nearly as much of a disaster as deserts like Chad or the Central African Republic. The currency, the leone, has been so unstable that farmers smuggle their produce out for sale in Ivory Coast. In 1987, diamond traders found they had to pay so many near-worthless leones for diamonds that they began to withdraw currency from banks by the truckload. When this happens, most governments simply print more banknotes. Sierra Leone, which has its currency printed in England, didn't even have enough money to pay for paper and ink. Currency disappeared, and the economy temporarily reverted to barter.

In Africa, natural wealth seems only to increase the scale of national follies. Nigeria, an oil producer and member of OPEC, is wasting a fortune trying to build a steel industry. The site the Nigerians have chosen is far away from iron ore, coking coal, or transport routes.

At the same time, government-subsidized gasoline sells for about 40 cents a gallon—the cheapest price in the world—so Nigerians waste fuel and import more cars than the

economy can afford. Tanker loads of artificially cheap gasoline are smuggled out for sale in neighboring countries. Waste in the oil industry is so great, that Nigeria cannot meet its OPEC export quota. Twenty years from now, when Nigeria has pumped



its oil wells dry, it will have little to show for them.

Africa and AIDS

One disservice that many African governments do their people is to deny that AIDS is ravaging their countries. Zimbabwe's is one of the worst. Though no one knows for sure, a quarter of the adult population—millions of people—may be infected, but the government officially reported only 499 cases of AIDS in 1989. At the central hospital of Harare, the capital, AIDS kills more children than any other disease. Still, government authorities refuse to recognize the problem or disseminate public health information. When criticized for its silence, the state-controlled press complained about "the slurs on Africans brought about by the West's obsessive determination to blame AIDS on Africa."

One doctor estimates that 80 percent of Zimbabwe's best-paid men are infected with AIDS.

In the mean time, Africans continue to infect each other at a great rate. For reasons that are not entirely understood, many Africans seem to get AIDS through heterosexual intercourse. Rich Africans are often very promiscuous, so the millions who will be dying over the next decade will be

from the upper classes. One doctor estimates that 80 percent of Zimbabwe's best-paid men are infected. AIDS could put an end to Africa's rocketing population growth and even cause a serious decline, beginning around the year 2010.

Just as Western governments and aid agencies refuse to criticize African dictators for fear of being called "racist," the Western press is squeamish about reporting African savagery. In April 1991, Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria started a small war against each other

that may have left as many as one thousand dead. The streets of the town of Bauchi were littered with decapitated corpses, but few Americans ever heard about it.

In the summer of 1988, the majority Tutsis of Burundi sent in the army to slaughter some 5,000 minority Hutu tribesmen. This was a repetition of a similar exercise in 1972, when Tutsi soldiers killed an estimated 100,000 unarmed Hutu. Neither event got much attention. In 1991, when Liberian rebel leaders captured the former president, Samuel K. Doe, they first tortured him to death. Then they carved off his lips, ears, and genitals and put his body on public display.

The press prefers to skip lightly over news of this kind, to avoid complaints from American blacks about "negative stereotypes." Of course, if white South African police shoot into a menacing crowd of blacks, it is front-page news.

Except for South Africa, whose government seeks the consent of the (white) electorate, and for one or two newcomers to democracy like Botswana, African governments rule by brute force. Since 1957, there have been 150 African heads of state, but only six gave up power voluntarily. All the rest died in office, were murdered, or were thrown out in military coups. In virtually every African country, the people who rule are the people who own the weapons. This explains why African countries spent \$2.2 billion on imported weapons in 1983 while they spent only \$1.7 billion on medical care.

Until it was overthrown in 1991, the Ethiopian government was spending 60 percent of its revenue on the military.

Impermissible Explanations

Why, then, is Africa poor? For anyone who has looked into the question, there seems to be little doubt that Africans have brought misery upon themselves. Whether it be in Africa, Haiti, or Washington (DC) (see book review, this page), Africans show little evidence of an ability to organize and run a modern economy. Just as blacks

have made wastelands of those parts of the United States in which they are a majority and over which they exercise authority, so have Africans desolated a continent bursting with riches.

Of course, it is not permissible to conclude that this is because of natural, genetic handicaps from which blacks suffer, so anti-white arguments inevitably rush in to fill the explanatory void. Blacks the world over, whether they live only among themselves or among people of other races, are said to lead lives of failure and misery only because whites have oppressed them in the past and continue to oppress

them in the present. It makes no difference that this explanation falls apart under scrutiny; it is the only one that is permitted because the alternative does not conform to current political dogma.

There can be no pleasure in saying so, but the facts point to one conclusion. Whether in Africa or America, Haiti or Great Britain, blacks are poor because they are, for the most part, incapable of lifting themselves from poverty. Africa is poor, just as Harlem is poor, because it is populated by Africans. •

Kinshasa on the Potomac

Jonathan Agronsky, *Marion Barry: The Politics of Race*, British American Publishing 1991, 380 pp., \$21.95

An African dictator might have run the city of Washington just as Marion Barry did, but blacks supported him to the end.

reviewed by Samuel Taylor

Marion Barry, mayor of Washington (DC), was the nightmare of urban America. For 12 years, he let the city fester and decline, while he chased skirts, sniffed cocaine, and surrounded himself with toadies and peculators. Flagrant incompetence and corruption might have turned voters against him, except that it attracted the criticism of whites. Blacks closed ranks in support of one of their own, especially after an FBI team videotaped the mayor smoking crack cocaine and a white prosecutor put him on trial. A largely black jury very nearly let Mr. Barry go free, but he was finally bounced from office and is now in jail.

Jonathan Agronsky, a reporter for the Voice of America, has written an account of Marion Barry's rise from Mississippi obscurity and his fall from the heights of power. Mr. Agronsky fails to draw any larger conclusions from his story—he treats every unhappy detail as if it were unprecedented and unparalleled—but he has collected enough facts for a thoughtful reader to draw his own conclusions.

Marion Barry grew up in the South, and developed an early racial consciousness that was fueled by a strong dislike for whites. When he worked as a waiter at an American Legion post, he spat in the food that he served to white customers—just as Jesse Jack-



son did when he was a youngster. He started in "civil rights" work as a college student, and was the first chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Mr. Barry moved to Washington (DC) and adopted the 1960s activist regalia of shades, dashiki, and afro—often with a comb stuck in it. After years as a small-scale street agitator, his career took off in 1967, when he managed to shake loose a big grant from Lyndon Johnson's Labor Secretary, Barry Wirtz, to train "street dudes" for useful jobs.

In its first three years of existence, Mr. Barry's organization, Youth Pride, Inc., got an astonishing \$9 mil-

lion in federal money. Some of it went astray. In 1969, 17 Pride employees were indicted for embezzlement. One pleaded guilty and four were convicted. Some of the small businesses that were started with Pride money became open drug dealerships or fencing operations.

The corruption was clear for all to see, but as black reporter, Rich Adams, explained to Mr. Agronsky, Youth Pride had a standard answer whenever white authorities asked pointed questions:

"Don't ask, honky motherf***er, because if you do, we're going to go out on the street, and we're going to start a riot and say that the white man is trying to destroy black economic progress.' And it scared the living s**t out of those liberals who didn't want any trouble."

"... So what if Marion and [his wife] Mary Treadwell got a couple of hundred thousand dollars? It was worth it to the federal government not to have them stirring s**t in the community."

As Mr. Adams puts it in his colorful way:

"... [T]his was the chance for the black guy to f**k over the white system. And he [Barry] did it with style. It wasn't just rob a 7-11. It was rob the whole goddamn federal government"

Some Youth Pride employees did it without style. In 1973, while Mr. Barry was still nominal head of the organization, four employees were shot to death in less than a month. Three of the killers were other Pride employees. All—both killers and killed—were members of a gang that specialized in armed robbery.

Even some of those who were doing it with style got caught. Though she was by then no longer Mr. Barry's wife, Mary Treadwell was indicted for stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars from the government. The same investigation snared four other Youth Pride administrators but couldn't get the goods on the top man.

"That's sophistication."

In 1971, Mr. Barry expanded his empire by winning an elected seat on the Washington school board. During his campaign, he covered up his complete ignorance of school issues by sending aides to tape-record his opponents' speeches and using the same phrases, often word for word. When asked about this tactic, he replied, "What's wrong with that? That's sophistication."

Mr. Barry soon won election to the DC City Council, and promptly discovered on which side the bread was buttered. He pleased businessmen, many of them white, by introducing laws to reduce taxes for merchants and developers. By the time he was ready to run for mayor in 1978, the Metropolitan Board of Trade was so beholden to him that it invited DC bigwigs to a \$500-a-plate dinner and raised \$60,000 for him in a single afternoon. Some white benefactors must have felt a pang of worry when Mayor Barry, as one of his first official acts, set aside 35 percent of all District contracts for non-whites.

Mr. Agronsky is hard-pressed to point to much that Mayor Barry ever did for Washington. During his first year or two, he appears to have shown a flicker of interest in improving city services, but that soon waned. All of his measures seemed designed mainly to tighten his grip on power. Not even his former aides saw things differently. Mr. Agronsky quotes one who says, "I could not separate out what he was legitimately interested in for the

public good and what he was interested in for his political gain."

Spending the Public's Money

One thing Mayor Barry did was spend government money. At the end of his first year in office, he paid for a \$50,000 advertising supplement in *Time* magazine, full of praise and photographs of the mayor. As he grew more confident, he spent more. He once took 50 city employees and consultants to the US Virgin Islands, ostensibly to give advice to the local government. He and his entourage



The Barry administration had a particular style.

spent \$250,000 in taxpayer money sunning themselves and shopping.

Corruption flourished under Mayor Barry. One of his closest aides, Deputy Mayor Ivanhoe Donaldson went to jail for fleecing the government. Another deputy mayor, Alphonse Hill was convicted of extortion, tax evasion, and defrauding the city. Another aide, Robert B. Robinson, resigned after pleading guilty to embezzlement.

The Department of Human Services, the agency that was supposed to be making life better for Washington's poor, gave off a particularly bad smell. After one department head was caught with his hand in the till and fired, his successor lasted only nine months. He was found to be using city money to pay rent and buy groceries, both for himself and for his top assistants. By the time Mr. Barry finally left office, a full dozen of his chief aides had gone to jail for corruption, and many others had left under clouds.

His administration was as incompetent as it was corrupt. Although Washington had nearly twice as many housing bureaucrats per public-hous-

ing resident as Baltimore or Detroit, one fifth of the public housing was vacant because it was waiting for repairs. The waiting time for a unit was seven years. Emergency services personnel were so arrogant and lazy that calls to 911 sometimes weren't even answered and an ambulance might not show up until the next day. Fourteen people reportedly died, waiting for help that never came.

Almost one in five voters in Mayor Barry's city were on the municipal payroll—about three times the national average. During his 12 years in office, Mayor Barry boosted the number of city bureaucrats by 27 percent while the population of the District fell by 30,000. Bureaucrats were so contemptuous of the public that the city finally started sending them to class to teach them how to answer the telephone without insulting people.

In the last three years of Mayor Barry's tenure, judges cited the city no less than seven times for systematic mistreatment of people in its care: juvenile delinquents, prisoners, and the mentally retarded. In 1989, *Washington Monthly* called the Barry administration "the worst city government in America." Drugs spread across the city, and it became the murder capital of the world.

Washington was rife with rumors of mayoral womanizing and drug-taking. One of many reported lovers, Sallie Melendez, went on the city payroll at \$63,185 a year before she even had a job description. Another, who used to spend days on end with the mayor, lost

Calls to 911 sometimes weren't even answered and an ambulance might not show up until the next day.

in a cocaine haze, got \$180,000 to start a school to teach black girls how to become models. In May of 1988, Mayor Barry reportedly threatened to cut off her funding unless she would give him oral sex.

His antics were eventually too much even for a white press that is terrified of offending blacks, but Mayor Barry brushed off criticism as "a new style of lynching." He compared himself to Jesus and Gandhi, who were persecuted for the good they did. As his

white critics turned up the volume, his popularity among blacks only grew.

Caught in the Act

Black supporters were more vocal than ever when, in early 1990, the FBI used a former mistress to lure the mayor to a hotel room, where agents videotaped him smoking cocaine. Black radio stations, black newspapers, and black "civil rights" leaders backed him with virtual unanimity. Even black preachers lined up behind the view that Mayor Barry was the victim of a racist frame-up. As one put it, the mayor was "in trouble right now because he is too smart, too intelligent, and too black." After his indictment, Mayor Barry made a great show of visiting black churches and praying in public. Parishioners quickly raised a reported \$100,000 for his legal expenses.

In April 1990, fresh from a drying out session at a drug treatment center, the indicted mayor appeared at a conference of black mayors. Jesse Jackson, who was about to deliver the keynote address, ostentatiously called him up to the podium. Four hundred black mayors then rose to their feet and gave Marion Barry a standing ovation. Mr. Jackson, with no apparent sense of irony, then proceeded with his keynote address on drug policy.

Black support for the mayor was so great that when he finally went to trial on 14 counts of cocaine possession and lying to a grand jury, he boasted that it would be impossible to find a Washington jury that would convict him, no matter what the evidence. "All it takes," he said, "is one juror saying, 'I'm not going to convict Marion Barry—I don't care what you say.'"

He was very nearly right. In spite of overwhelming evidence and even an open admission by his defense lawyer that the mayor had used crack, the panel of ten blacks and two whites convicted him on only one charge of cocaine possession. On an astonishing ten out of the 14 charges, the jurors could not reach agreement.

The verdict was so outrageous that Thomas Jackson, the trial judge, later told a Harvard audience that he had never seen a stronger case for the prosecution and that he was convinced some black jurors had been

determined from the start to find the mayor innocent. He said they must have lied during jury selection when they told the court they would consider the evidence fairly.

It was later learned that a bloc of five black jurors consistently held out for acquittal. They claimed that the government had manufactured evidence and coached witnesses to lie. During deliberations, one pro-acquittal black accused another black, who



There were constant rumors of womanizing and drug-taking.

was leaning towards conviction, of not sufficiently identifying with her race. One black juror urged others to read a book about white racism before they voted on the charges. The decision to find Mayor Barry guilty on even a single charge is something of a miracle, since the black holdouts would not even vote to convict on the possession charge supported by the FBI videotape. Judge Jackson handed down the stiffest possible sentence for a first conviction, and Mr. Barry started serving a six-month sentence on October 6, 1991.

Larger Questions

Does Mr. Barry's career have any larger significance? Mr. Agronsky appears to find none, though he does confess that he is "amazed at the skill, frequency, and seeming ease with which Barry, until the very end, was able to use his minority status to extract concessions from the white establishment [and] emerge unscathed from repeated allegations of wrongdoing" Amazement is naive; Mr. Barry is just one in a long line of conmen like Congressman Gus Savage, Mayor Coleman Young, Reverend Al Sharpton, Miss Tawana Brawley, and a whole host of anonymous blacks who trade on their skin color every day.

Of greater interest are the obvious parallels between the Barry regime in

Washington and those in Africa that have helped lay waste an entire continent (see cover story). It is particularly contemptible that "civil rights" leaders, who presumably agitate in the name of "their people," should show the most callous disregard for them when they actually find themselves in a position to help. They are like African dictators who lobby white countries for aid only to steal or squander it. It is difficult to believe that they desire "progress" or "development" for anyone but themselves.

Mayor Barry takes 50 friends on a taxpayer-funded tropical vacation while his city—70 percent black—sinks ever deeper into crime, drugs, and misery. He takes out a self-congratulatory photo supplement in *Time* magazine. His appointed officers brazenly plunder the treasury. This is what one expects from third-world potentates of impoverished countries—and what else might Mayor Barry have done were it not for the restraints of white public opinion and a white system of justice?

The other larger story that Mr. Agronsky missed is the significance of near-monolithic black support for Mr. Barry. There could hardly have been a worse mayor for Washington, but blacks supported him to the end—even in the jury box. Why? Because whites criticized him. While whites parrot the mantras of racial harmony and equality, blacks put racial solidarity before all else. While whites are taught to smother any sense of their own racial interests, blacks increasingly make race the center-piece of their lives.

There could scarcely be a better example of the radical divergence in the interests of American blacks and whites than the radical divergence in their opinions about what Mayor Barry had done and what he deserved. Platitudes, no matter how earnestly repeated, cannot hide the vast differences in how blacks and whites see and interpret American society. What do these differences say about the prospects for the utopian, multi-racial society we are supposed to be building?

Mr. Agronsky has no answers because he doesn't think to ask the question. ●

O Tempora, O Mores!

Urban Nutcracker

The Ballethnic Dance Company of Atlanta (GA) has an all-affirmative action cast, made up of blacks, Hispanics, Vietnamese, Filipinos, and American Indians. It has debuted a



new version of the Christmas favorite, Tchaikovsky's *Nut Cracker Suite*, that it hopes will be more appealing to non-white children. The characters are no longer named Fritz and Clara but Leroy and Sarah. The Sugar Plum Fairy is now the Brown Sugar Fairy. The Land of Sweets has been transformed into the black-owned Yates and Milton Drug Store.

Building a Blacker Future

The reason South African blacks are in ignorance and poverty, it is said, is because of the oppression of Apartheid. It doesn't sound that way at the Veritas Secondary School in Soweto. Ten years ago, it was a model school, complete with science labs, home economics kitchens, and a library that "would rival the library in any white school," according to one parent.

Now, thieves have stolen every book, and have even pulled out the shelves. The laboratory and kitchens were stripped long ago. Thieves have even ripped out the school's wiring and plumbing, so it has neither electricity nor water. Rival tribal factions bring guns to school, and students threaten to kill each other. Once white rule is brought to an end, South Africa will begin to look more and more like the rest of black Africa.

White Mischief

Dubuque, Iowa is 98 percent white—too white for the city council, which recently decided to recruit several hundred black families to come live in the city. A few young whites expressed their objections to this plan by burning crosses and were immediately treated to the usual outraged lectures about tolerance and equality. Some of the lads later appeared on national television, where one pointed out that he knew of no place in America where crime, drugs, and poverty had not arrived along with blacks. He said he couldn't understand why his home town, where people still leave their doors unlocked, should go out of its way to court trouble.



Dubuque city council.

Objections of this kind were quickly brushed aside, and the good Germans and Irishmen of Dubuque rallied to the cause of recruiting black residents. Recently, the style has been to wear black and white ribbons in one's lapel to show approval for the plan.

What is going on here? Why is Dubuque actually hunting for black people? It is a uniquely white combination of ignorance and the desire to practice virtue. The official view on race, propagated tirelessly by the media, is that blacks are just like whites in every important way, and that their unfortunate behavior can only be the result of white prejudice and oppression. With no blacks on hand to dispel this view, the citizens of Dubuque have no reason to question it.

Thus, they probably think they have a perfect opportunity to practice virtue. Today, in America, the virtue that is most loudly applauded is

"tolerance," particularly of poor, dark-skinned people. With no local blacks on which to exercise their capacity for tolerance, the people of Dubuque cannot demonstrate America's most admired virtue. They are probably saying to themselves that although every other city in America may have failed to treat the black man as he deserves, by golly, Dubuque will get it right. We wish the city the best of luck.

More White Mischief

The University of Idaho at Moscow suffers from the same defect as the city of Dubuque—too many whites. The school recently tried to remedy that problem by establishing a chapter of an exclusively black fraternity. The hope is that this will send a message to blacks that they are welcome. More might then come to the university and bestow upon it the blessings of diversity. As W. Harold Godwin, vice president for student affairs explains, states with a large number of whites have a serious disadvantage:

"We at the University of Idaho and other institutions that are isolated by geography face a Catch-22 problem, in that we wish to have a diverse student body, but the lack of diversity in our environment makes it difficult to attract those very individuals."

Downhill Trend

A recent study at the University of Texas has found that the longer a Mexican family lives in the United States, the lower its level of education will sink. Up until now, the first generation of Mexican immigrants has been the most highly motivated, whereas succeeding generations are increasingly likely not to bother to graduate from high school. This is the exact opposite of the case for turn-of-the-century European immigrants, who went on to higher levels of education with every generation.

The study is based on historical data, and past trends will not necessarily hold in the future. In fact, it